467 668 focussing on some of their asserted policies, revealed that the union struggle was regarded as directed essentially against the government. This must be interpreted not only with regard to the general traits of the colonial system but also in relation to the commanding role that the government played in labor. It was first of all the principal employer: in a city [369] such as Dakar, a little more than a third of the wage-earners were dependent upon it. It was responsible for setting the [465] minimum wage, and it has happened that owing to budgetary considerations and general policy it established a lower figure than non-governmental employers might have adopted. Finally, during the period [466] in question, a central problem was that of enforcing the Code of Overseas Labor, enacted by Parliament in 1952. The civil administration was responsible for its enforcement, and the strikes of 1953 were [468] designed to bring pressure on the administration so as to obtain a "fair enforcement" of its provisions. In the interviews mentioned above, conflicts with employers were scarcely mentioned as such. Employers were identified with the civil administration; the terms "civil administration" and "colonialism" seemed almost interchangeable. The adversary of the unions being essentially the civil administration — and a "colonial civil administration" — their action inevitably assumed political significance, broadly defined.[40]

467 668 563 (2) In the field of union activities the hostility between the European component and the African component of the urban population showed itself most vividly. This stemmed not merely from the fact that the civil administration and the employers represented the power of the "whites." It was also noteworthy that European workers, employees, and [468] officials almost invariably formed separate unions, with goals sharply opposed to

[P. 17B]

8:Mercier E-5 (ca.1955) 1960
MS37 Senegal MS37

467 468 668 563 those of the African unions.[50] The acute crises produced by certain important strikes gave forceful expression to this rift. The African unions, despite their ideological differences, despite the personal rivalries that brought their leaders into opposition, often engaged in combined and coordinated activities. By contrast, the strikes of the African workers and those of the European workers scarcely ever coincided, though the latter might break out as a response to the [465] former in an effort to maintain the hierarchy of salary scales. As demonstrations of African unity against the civil administration and against European [578] controls in general, strikes were the only occasion in which the underlying tension characterizing the city appeared distinctly and in a generalized fashion. It was because they expressed this tension that their impact and the emotional response to them were so important.

467 468 668 (3) This was also the principal cause of their ultimate success. During such conflicts, demands were expressed that were far more extreme than those made by the parties. Thus, in the strikes of 1953, the union press and the union leaders evoked the possibility that African "loyalism" would be suspended and that the bonds between France and the Overseas Territories would be changed; the question of independence was openly and threateningly discussed. Union activities assumed a certain nationalistic coloring that the parties at that time disregarded. Behind every limited demand regarding salaries or the regulation of working conditions lay the fundamental anti-colonial demand; it was this demand that gave weight to the mass demonstrations and that carried the day.[51] It must be further noted that during this period major external ideological elements entered the contest, especially through the unions. An important number of their activists had studied techniques of organization,

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8: Mercier E-5 (ca. 1955) 1960 MS37 Senegal MS37

[50] *Cf.* P. Mercier, "Aspects des problèmes de stratification sociale," *Cahiers intl. de Soc.* XVIII, 1954.
[51] A scrutiny of union publications in 1953 made this evident.
[52] In a very broad sense; their composition was very heterogeneous and drawn from various strata.

[P.18C]

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17: Mercier--17 S-5 (1953-1954) 1954 MS37 Senegal MS37
Dakar

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differences in the daily rhythm are the arguments put forward by those who do not use purely racist arguments.

fact on the differences in economic status.

c) In principle there is no segregation in social life, either; certain public places, however (cafés, bars, etc.), strive directly or indirectly, to secure for themselves a purely European clientele. On the other hand, many clubs and associations of a recreational nature exclude Africans in fact (it is rarely statutory). The syndicates themselves, although they are not in principle founded on a racial basis, do not effect a mixing of Africans and Europeans, as a result of the divergence of interests and claims; the strikes, when they occur, are in practice purely African. Finally, the political parties are for the most part almost exclusively African; the European population as a whole is disinterested in local political activity. [575] [467] [468] [665]

d) Essentially the relations between Africans and Europeans are: relations at the place of work, between colleagues and, much more often, between subordinates and superiors, employees and bosses; relations between masters and domestics at home; common participation in cultural and sportive activities; relations between teachers and pupils or students. Relations of a more personal character(regular relationships, friendships, etc.) are much rarer. Intermarriages -- almost exclusively between African men and European women -- have a particular significance; there are practically none that have been contracted locally.

/20/ e) Here we shall not touch on the area of interracial judgments and attitudes, which must be the subject of more detailed investigations. It will suffice to say that all the observations made permit one to conclude that there is a

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369 families in which the father imposes on the child the spouse
177 of his choice. The spread of the teaching of the Moslem and
563 Christian religions count for much in this loosening of the
[584] too confining ties of family tradition. This breaking up of
[593] ancient, too narrow social structures is not a strictly /92/
[182] urban phenomenon; it also occurs in the countryside, but with less force and with a certain delay.

369 The presence of the industrial bloc of the Dakar-Niger,
565 on the other hand, has had as an effect the formation of a
178 working class, which is a specifically urban phenomenon. Although the ancient system of castes does exist in human contacts, that of social class is little by little being substituted for it. In sum, there actually exists a superposition of the two systems, but the pre-eminence of the second is al-
[177] ready being affirmed. Through daily contacts and the rapid
[467] diffusion of social ideas coming from the West, the mass of
[474] workers is organized, it is grouped by syndicates, it has set up consumer co-operatives. Because of the great number of the members of this worker group, the workshops of the Dakar-Niger and, through repercussion, the city of Thiès itself have become the most active and the busiest centers
• [468] of French West Africa. The strike that in 1948 paralyzed railroad traffic on the two lines (Dakar-Bamako and Dakar--Saint-Louis) for several months is certainly proof of the influence of a powerful and organized grouping, and a typical urban phenomenon.

369 Thus there exists in Thiès a somewhat special social
563 climate that sometimes makes the relations between Whites
578 and Blacks strained. Chiefly during these periods of social crises. But these tensions are always temporary and automatically disappear as soon as the conflict is settled.

369 A much more important problem that seems general
161 in all of the cities of Black Africa is that of the too rapid, if not excessive, swelling of the urban population. We have
[162] seen that the population of Thiès has almost doubled from 1945 (24,000 inhabitants) to 1953 (40,000 inhabitants). Dakar, Conakry, and Abidjan have grown in the same proportions.